

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 DHA-05 /070 W
-----006939 261244Z /47

R 251348Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6070

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6127

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, EINV, SHUM, PINS, ET, US
SUBJ: FAREWELL CALL ON BERHANE BAYEH

1. ACCOMPANIED BY NEWLY-ARRIVE CHARGE, DICK MATHERON, I MADE BRIEF 25-MINUTE FAREWELL CALL OCT 24 ON MAJ. BERHANE BAYEH, CHIEF OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF DIRG.

2. BERHANE WAS MOST CORDIAL. I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN ABOUT REAPPEARANCE OF REFERENCES TO CIA IN LATEST PMAC STATEMENT (ADDIS 6076) AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT EPMG HAS NOT EMBARKED ON THAT KIND OF CAMPAIGN AGAIN. BERHANE CLAIMED NOT TO BE AWARE OF IT, AND AFTER TELLING ME THAT OF COURSE CIA DOES THINGS USG DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT AS REVEALED IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, SAID HE ACCEPTED MY WORD THAT CIA HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH DOMESTIC OPPOSITION GROUPS IN ETHIOPIA, AND THOUGHT CIA REFERENCES HAD SIMPLY SLIPPED BY.

3. I ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO RAISE ONCE AGAIN PROBLEM OF COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED AMERICAN FIRMS SAYING I VERY MUCH HOPED COMPENSATION COMMITTEE COULD FIND WAY TO SET A DATE FOR NEGOTIATING WITH SOME AMERICAN FIRM SO AS TO AVOID BILATERAL PROBLEMS LATER ON. HE TOOK NOTE.

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4. FOR HIS PART, HE AGAIN STATED EPMG'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH US, AND OBVIOUSLY EXPECTED AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE AYALEW TO HELP IN THIS REGARD. I TOLD HIM IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT WASHINGTON WAS APPARENTLY DESIROUS OF RECIPROCATING, WHICH PLEASED HIM. HE MADE A BRIEF PITCH FOR THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT THEY HAD PURCHASED "OR THE MONEY", THEN DROPPED SUBJECT. MOST OF REMAINDER OF

HIS REMARKS WERE FAMILIAR PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION PARTICULARLY IN HUMAN RIGHTS TERMS. HE INSISTED THAT FAR MORE ETHIOPIANS ENJOYED HUMAN RIGHTS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELDS THAN BEFORE REVOLUTION, THAT REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WERE WILDLY EXAGGERATED WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO REPORTS CIRCULATED ABROAD AT THE END OF LAST APRIL AND TO CURRENT CROP OF RUMORS WHICH HE CLAIMED WERE BEING SPREAD BY ENEMIES OF REVOLUTION. HE ADMITTED THAT MANY TRIALS WERE BY COURTS MARTIAL WHICH HE THOUGHT WE DIDN'T LIKE, BUT MAINTAINED THAT REGULAR CIVILIAN COURTS WERE STILL FUNCTIONING WELL. KEBELES OCCASIONALLY COMMITTED EXCESSES BUT EPMG HAD BEEN ABLE EXERT MUCH MORE CONTROL OVER THEM IN RECENT MONTHS. FINALLY, HE SAID MANY PEOPLE'S CONCEPTION OF DIRG WAS THAT THEY WERE SOLDIERS WHO WERE SIMPLY INTERESTED IN SUMMARY ACTION. THIS WAS NOT TRUE. DIRG HAD NO MORE INTEREST THAN ANYONE ELSE IN ARRESTING A/O SHOOTING PEOPLE. DIRG'S CHIEF INTEREST WAS IN FURTHERING REVOLUTION.

5. I ASKED HIM WHAT HAD BECOME OF OPERATION TORCH. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN AN ATTACK ON HUMERA AND ANOTHER ON A POLICE STATION IN WOLLEGA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (NEWS TO US), BUT WHEN I SAID I HOPED EPMG DID NOT ASSOCIATE US WITH THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY AND THAT IT SEEMED TO ME TO BE A HEALTHY THING THAT WE COULD EXCHANGE INFO ON MATTERS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS KIND FRANKLY, HE AGREED, AND SAID FLATLY THAT EPMG DID NOT THINK USG WAS INVOLVED IN ANY WAY.

6. BERHANE ENDED BY WISHING ME GOOD LUCK AND SAYING HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEE MATHERON AT ANY TIME.
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Sent Date: 25-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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